'N Ausgeordne Schillgrott

'S iss ordlich weit do owwe draus,
Dart in re gleene Leen;
In me gleene Heischen waar
En alti Fraa deheem.

Do waar viel Aerwet, meh wie recht,
Des hot ihr Zeit genumme;
Hot alfert g'schaft, un waar deheem,
Iss naeryets schunscht hiekumme.

Sie hot mol Ursach g'hat far geh
Ordlich weit vun heem;
Zu weit far Gaul un Wagge geh,
So geht sie mit der Dreen.

Des waar zu ihre all so fremm,
Waar ordlich viel dezu;
Sie waar devor noch net vun heem,
Sie kaum wees was zu duh.

Die Nochbere hen zusamme g'saat,
En Freind iss in der Not:
Noh gehn sie zu der alte Fraa,
Un gewwe guter Rot.

Sehnscht viel Sach, wu do net sehnscht,
So'n Drip iss arrick schee;
Un wann'd mol iwwer'm Baerrick bischt,
Dart sehnscht noch viele meh.

Hen ihre 'n scheeni Zeit gewinscht,
Un hen ihr aa des g'saat;
An so me Blatz dart iss die Lein,
Noh bischt im naegschte Schtaat.

Die Fraa kann des net recht verschteh,
So fremme, fremme Sache;
Hot ausgemacht sie geht druf los,
Un 's Bescht devun zu mache.

Dann iss sie in der Depot gange,
Die Dreen waar noh schun daert;
Geht in die Coach un nemmt en Sitz,
Noh waar sie aa glei faert.

Conductor hot zu ihre g'saat:
"Gehscht ordlich weit vun heem"—
"Ya," saagt sie, "zu weit far'n Gaul,
So geh ich in der Dreen."

"Alles iss mer arrick fremm,
Bin traewwele net gewehnt;
Mei Freind waar'n mir en grossi Hilf,
Sie hen mir Sach expleent.

"Sie hen mir so viel Sache g'saat,
Ich wees net was sie meene;
Awwer wann mer an die Schtaat Lein kumme,
Die daet ich mol gern sehne.

"Ich wees net was en Schtaat Lein iss,
Ich hab noch nix so g'sehne;
Ich hab gedenkt du daetscht verleicht
Die Lein zu mir expleene."

'S hot g'scheint die Fraa waar bissel dumm,
Hot's g'heert an ihrem Schwetze;
Hot ausgemacht, do grickt er G'schpass,
Far'n Drick uf sie versetze.

"Ich wees graad wu die Schtaat Lein iss"—
Sei Kopp, den dutt er nucke—
"Ich bin zurick in blendi Zeit,
Un saag dir wann zu gucke."

Der Conductor kummt noh glei zurick,
Hot g'schwetzt as wie gedruckt;
"Nau nemm du mei Binoculars,
Noh waerd mol glei geguckt.

"Binoculars sin en hendich Ding,
Wann bischt sie mol gewehnt;
Mit so me Glas kannscht Sache sehne,
As 's blose Aag net sehnt."

Noh hot sie darrich's Glas geguckt,
Sie hot schier nimmi g'schtoppt;
Der Conductor langt owwe uf sei Kopp,
En Haar sich raus geroppt.

Er hebt die Haar graad var des Glass,
Browiert es zu expleene;
"Wann du nau recht scharf guckscht,
Dann kannscht die Schtaat Lein sehne."—

"Ich sehn die Schtaat Lein arrick ut,
'S iss alles arrick schee;
Un wann ich net bedroge bin,
Dann sehn ich aa noch meh.

"'S iss ebbes uf der Lein as zawwelt,
Es guckt selleweg zu mir;
Ich kann net saage was es iss,
Es guckt wie'n wild Gedier."

Der Conductor hot noh nei geguckt,
Die Lein waar net gans glaar;
Des hot ihn schun gebaddert g'hat,
'S war ebbes uf der Haar.

Er guckt es zwett mol, arrick scharf,
'S hot ebbes dart gewaddelt;
Er nemmt die Haar g'schwindt weck, es iss
En Laus druf naus gegraddelt.

Des hot ihn so gebaddert g'hat,
Hot ordlich schei geguckt:
Mer hot gemeent er waer vertschoked,
Er hot schier nimmi g'schluckt.

Sie wees, dass er der Humbug schpielt,
Far sie recht wiescht bedriege;
Er hot browiert sie's glaawe mache,
Mit yuscht e bissel liege.

"Ich saag dir, was du g'sehne hoscht,
Do kannscht dich druf verlosse;
Sell waar en Schillgrott uf der Lein,
Sie iss druf naus geloffe.

"Do hot's Gediere aller Sart,
Un wann sie gehn schpaziere,
Dann laafe sie dart uf der Lein,
As sie sich net verliere."

Dass sell Gedier en Schillgrott waar,
Des hot die Fraa gezweiwelt;
Hett er sell vannenaus gewisst,
Hett er sie net gedeiwelt.

"Gediere so wie ich do sehn,
Des hawwich net erwort;
Schillgrotte hemmer aa deheem,
Awwer sie sin net ausgeort.

"Dei Schillrott Schtori guckt net gut,
Glaab net as dich viel batt;
Alle Schillgrott hot en Schwanz,
Die do hot kenner g'hat.

"Nochdem, wann'd Leit Sach weise witt,
Un weescht es iss net waahr,
Dann loss dich net verwische mit
'Re Schillgrott uf der Haar."

* * *

Ich geb eich Leit en guter Rot,
Den kenn' ihr aa noh palte;
Wann ihr vun heem gehn, loss so Kerls
Eich net far Narre halte.

—DR. D. GEORGE KNECHT
June 1939

The Hostler of Hereford, Pennsylvania

DR. ARTHUR D. GRAEFF

THIS is a study in leather, in wagons and horses. Leather harness, from gears to ivory bridle rings and beautifully encased rosettes; vehicles from the colonial covered wagon, the tallyho stage coach to the rubber tired buggy; horses from here to heaven in a parade of stunning grandeur; these are the elements which make the hostler of Hereford tick and those who know him tingle in amazement.

Mr. A. D. Spaar is a landlord of a wayside inn at the junction of roads which lead in various directions from his hotel to Allentown, Reading and Philadelphia. The village which surrounds his unique establishment is named Hereford, situated on the boundary between Berks and Lehigh Counties of Pennsylvania. This is the heart of the truly Pennsylvania Dutch country. On every hand the traveller may see the imposing farm houses, the well painted barns and fields rich with the promise of a fruitful harvest. If the wayfarer will pause to listen he may hear the natives discoursing in the patois of the Palatinate just as their ancestors spoke two centuries ago, when they emerged from the filthy tubs which brought them to Philadelphia from Germany. Adam Spaar is a Pennsylvania German and modestly proud of his heritage.

"Yes I speak Dutch, broken English and dumb" he exclaims, but quickly adds "You see I can speak three ways and these English fellers can speak only one."

A few years ago the innkeeper was two hundred and sixty-five pounds of man but recent illness has worn him down to approximately two hundred and forty pounds by the platform scale which forms a part of his museum. Gray hairs form at his temples, proclaiming advancing age, lines form in his face when one catches a glance of him in repose. The age of the man in years, may be anywhere between fifty and seventy but in spirit he is eternally young, particularly when he is privileged to "shadow drive" a team of horses before an appreciative audience. For shadow drive he must. The fast moving events of the last few decades have changed his world and only vicariously can he command his four dappled greys. While he speaks his huge body sways rythmically and gracefully with the imaginary tilt of a wagon rolling at high speed over rutted roads. His voice sinks to an almost inaudible whisper as he exhorts his beasts. "Easy now Pete e-e-easy there Dan—wo-o-o-" in soft sibiliant tones he purrs when he wants them to measure a careful stride and a sharp "Whoa" when his team must halt.

Spaar prefers to speak German but he always addresses his horses in English. "It's too hard for a horse to learn two languages" he explains "I bought many horses from English people and rented them to Englishers so the horse was always broke to English."

Then, mischievously, he adds "But when I get mad and forget myself I swear at them in Dutch. I can let myself out better with Dutch swear words." And then, as if reading the thoughts of his auditors, "Only don't get me wrong I don't let em know I'm mad. I talk kind like to 'em even when I am mad, even when I swear Dutch words." To illustrate his methods of discipline he will embark upon a harangue in the Pennsylvania German addressing his imaginary charge "Donnervetter Pete you must do better, if you don't behave yourself I must sell you to the Englishers. 'Krimentichs nochemol' how often must I tell you to hold your head up so you won't stumble for me. I-I-I—it is too much. Harry Yommer now try it again. See I have a sugar lump if you are good."

The lecture on equestrian-culture has taken place in the barroom of the Hereford Hotel of which Spaar is the landlord, and bartender. Overhead, suspended from beams and rafters, hang innumerable objects of curious interest. There are flasks in the shape of fishes; flails for threshing grains, long iron spoons which once hung at the sides of some open hearth. Many kinds of antiquated tools and weapons dangle from the ceiling. In comment the modest proprietor says "Yes I got some dings which the odders ain't got and odders has dings I ain't got and so it goes." But the dominant note struck in this chauvinistic display is one of horses, harness and four wheeled vehicles. The pictures of roses in red and green painted on the windows and on the borders of the walls seem out of place in the stable-like atmosphere. Square placards posted at frequent intervals, proclaiming in crude verse that credit is not extended or quaint philosophy in regard to the evil of drink, seem out of place, somehow, when one expects to hear the swish of a horse's tail, the stamp of a hoof or a halter rattling against the heavy oaken sides of the feeding trough or the rustle of dry hay being snatched from a ladder rack and munched by huge jaws moving in monotonous cadence.

As if suspecting that his guests need closer contact with reality mein host swings open the great doors of his barroom and bows his audience out. "We will now go to the Museum." he says, as leads the way to a long shed which forms for nearly one hundred yards along the Allentown road. These sheds once were his stables. In the heyday of his Riding Academy and his Horse Circus the stalls on each side of the long livery stables were filled with horses, mules and ponies.

A pungent odor, reminiscent of horseflesh, still lingers but cobwebs are spun across hay racks. The elevated mangers are broken down in many places, partitions between the stalls have been torn away to make room for his huge museum pieces. While horses no longer whinny and neigh to greet their rotund master the vehicles which they drew, the saddles they carried and the harness they wore are still there as if patiently awaiting some resurrection day.

There are buggies of all descriptions, Phaetons, Jenny Linds, democrats and piano boxes. Single trees and double trees hang on huge hand wrought nails along the walls. A dozen or more saddles, polished to a shiny brilliance, now ride a long wooden pole, permanently at rest. There are English saddles, Western saddles and of course the mid-victorian side saddle which met milady's demand for modest equipment so vital to propriety in bygone days.

The harness room is clearly marked by a large sign above a closed door. Silently the ageing landlord opens the door and invites his guests to survey his treasures. Black leather, with shining silver buckles and sharply contrasting white ivory rings forms a pretty picture when the sets are arranged in rows for purposes of display. There are bits of shining steel, reins of soft thin leather and broad belly bands, some of them lined with wooly sheepskin. Cruppers, driving reins, check reins and ornamented wither saddles from which project glistening nickle plated rings through which the driving reins are supposed to pass. Broad britch bands with Yankee straps attached and the long leather traces, nearly an inch thick and fully an inch wide, form the heavier harness. It is all well oiled, pliant and soft, ready to equip a horse at a moment's notice.

Out again in the passage way the landlord leads his guests along empty stalls. His whole being seems changed. The vivacious, gesticulating showman of the barroom, just a few minutes ago, has become silent and almost morose.

He measures his tread lumberingly and speaks only to answer queries. It is almost as if he were a ghost, haunting the scenes of his former activities and fearing to speak lest he break the charm. Occasionally he pauses at a stall and lingers there while his guests utter inane remarks about horseshoes which bring luck and curry combs are likened to beauty parlor equipment. Is it a tear that rolls along the wrinkles below his eyes as he picks up a thin, polished horseshoe and places it reverently on a peg in stall Eighteen? Somehow wisecracks sound like blasphemy in a consecrated temple.

At the far end of the long passageway a neighing sound penetrates the ear. The clatter of horses hoofs against the paneled stall calls the visitor to a sense of reality again and mein host becomes loquacious once more. Two horses still are housed in the spacious stable. Or, more correctly, one horse and a small pony are the only survivors.

While Mr. Spaar strokes the face of the sorrel mare he explains that he keeps her to clip the grass in the amusement park which adjoins his hotel "I and her keep the grass down. She eats it and I work the lawn mower. I used to hitch her into a one horse mower but it went through me to see her work so. Now we work easier."

The pony? "Oh I just keep her for the kids in the neighborhood. Every kid likes a pony you know."

The park referred to by the master of the estate extends along the rear of the stables. It is a large open lot dotted here and there with relics of wagon days. A crumbling shed houses a hearse and a covered wagon, as well as other outmoded carriages. Placed on each antique is a large placard with a fitting epitaph, which in another setting might seem humorous but here seems melancholy indeed. Certainly the attitude and bearing of the owner does not suggest levity when he calls attention to a tombstone erected to the memory of a horse or to the placard on the hearse which states that it has carried many good men and women to their reward in heaven.

Near to the shed stands an open air stage. On this platform Spaar conducted his horse circus for the pleasure of visitors at regular intervals, which meant as often as he could between teaching his horses new tricks.

The showman is irrepressible in this German horseman. He will demonstrate the antics which he taught his charges and show keen delight in so doing.

"Now Pete what do the boys do to the girls?" he will ask and then with his own lips imitate a horse in the act of kissing.

"And now what do the girls do to the boys" again imitating the action of his imaginary horses he will simulate a horse's head bobbing up and down while he strokes his own cheek with his hand indicating that the girls like to cuddle close. In this way a horse show is produced with horses in absentia.

Occasionally the hostler of Hereford has opportunity to revel in his old joys. A few years ago the Alumni of Muhlenberg College staged a parade in Allentown. They rented his band wagon which is ninety years old, procured four mules, two white and two black, and hired Spaar to drive the team. He was in his glory and the old grads of Muhlenberg won first prize in the parade. Now and then enterprising couples plan Victorian weddings which call into service his out-moded vehicles and give him a chance to don his high silk hat, his frock coat, checkered vest and flowing tie while he is perched atop a tallyho. In 1936 he was asked to check on the equipment of a horse and wagon parade in Reading, Pennsylvania, which was staged in preparation for a Merchants' Bargain Day. The Chamber of Commerce was exasperated because he would not permit any part of the parade to get under way until the manes of all the horses were combed just right, or every buckle fastened at just the right position and every detail cared for down to the most minute fleck of dust on the mirror-like dashboards.

Auf Wiedersehen Herr Spaar. Perhaps you are right when you say that there must be horses in heaven!

(The Pennsylvania German antiques collected and exhibited in such a bizarre manner by the quaint character above described, continued through many years to attract guests to the well known hostelry at Hereford. However, since Dr. Graeff wrote the above sketch, the collection has ceased to exist. It was dispersed at public auction only a short time ago.—ED.)

WIE GROSS?

Ich hab emol gelese
Vum me Kaater so gescheit;
Er hot sich ausgesproche
Iwwer Sache weit un breit.

Mer daete Ebbes heere,
Kennt schwetze unser Vieh,
Was sie vun uns denke
Un saage schpot un frieh.

Mer daete ordlich schrummple
In der Wog mit unsrer Katz,
Un der Hund daet viel meh wiege,
Wann er waer an unserm Platz.

In der Kewwich mit seim Voggel
Kennt mancher kraddle nei,
Der yetzt braucht zwansich Schtuwwe,
Un Gaarte newe bei.

Mei Nochber hot en Hundel,
Sie fiehrt es an der Schnur,
Des meh Verschtand wie sie hot,
Vun sellem bin ich schure.

Un mancher hot en Esel,
Der hot viel meh Verschtand,
As wie sei ufgeblosner Meeschter
In Schpite vun Geld un Land.

Wann ye die Zeit dutt kumme —
Un pletzlich iwwer Nacht —
Dass unser Vieh daet schwetze,
Dann saag ich eich—geb acht!

—LOUISE A. WEITZEL